



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Working together for a safer Scotland



Joint Communication on behalf of

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and The Fire Brigades Union:

SFRS Resource Working Group

The SFRS and the Fire Brigades Union established a working group in January 2014 to identify, discuss, and negotiate ways in which to improve levels of service delivery whilst taking into account the financial challenges facing the service.

At an early stage of the negotiations the group identified that a wide range of WDS operational models and crewing arrangements currently exist across each of the service delivery areas and shared the view that for a range of reasons regarding fire-fighter and community safety, standard operating procedures, financial management and improved utilisation of resources, this situation was unsustainable.

The challenges being faced by the service have been the subject of robust discussion. Specifically, the FBU have stressed that, whilst they recognise that there are financial challenges, the SFRS should ensure that priority is given to investing in a safe and sustainable operational response model. In response, the SFRS has emphasised its commitment to fire-fighter safety and to protecting front-line service delivery outcomes and, to on-going discussions regarding the distribution of resources to achieve these aims. It was also identified that some areas were experiencing regular deficiencies and were reliant on overtime to maintain appliance availability which is contrary to NJC agreements.

Against this background, the group identified that the initial priority was to reduce the significant levels of overtime currently being utilised to maintain operational fire cover. It was agreed to determine what the SFRS operational arrangements should be and to set these out within a resource based crewing model that will replace the current legacy arrangements. This will allow for the early identification of priority areas with a crewing shortfall and allow for these to be addressed using voluntary transfers, redistribution of posts and targeted recruitment.

The following general principles are to be applied within the SFRS operational response framework:

- All crewing/mobilising arrangements will be based on an agreed response model in order to ensure a Safe System of Work
- A ridership factor will be applied to provide contingency for leave and absence. The ridership factor will be aligned with the requirements of the duty system.
- All designated “first appliances” will run with a minimum crew of 5
- All designated “second appliances” will be crewed appropriately in accordance with the agreed response model and in all circumstances with a minimum crew of 4.
- High reach and CARPs will continue to have dedicated crews. High reach and CARPs will continue with legacy crewing arrangements ahead of a full review of appliance distribution.

- Specialist appliances will be resourced in accordance with the agreed response model and will take into account any station specific rescue capability resource requirements.
- Crewing at specific stations such as Oban, Inverness and Dumfries will take account of their location.

In order to implement the resource based crewing model, it has been agreed that each whole-time station is to be categorised to ensure that similar stations are crewed on the same basis and resources distributed to support front-line crewing in accordance with the above principles. The group have also reached an agreement to review the day-crewing arrangements currently applied within in the East service delivery area and to redistribute these posts to support WDS stations whilst ensuring that fire cover is maintained

The implementation of a resource based crewing model will ensure sufficient resources and personnel are mobilised to all incident types, will improve the availability of current resources across all of Scotland, will identify the demand for WDS recruitment and allow overtime to be carefully managed. The introduction of resource based crewing is based on maintaining Safe Systems of Work and the principles that have been agreed can be provided for within the SFRS 2014/15 budget allocation; this creates the space for continued discussions surrounding other Workforce matters such as recruitment, standardisation of terms and conditions (specifically CPD and additional responsibility allowances) and duty systems.

Therefore the resource requirements of this agreement between the SFRS and the FBU has been considered as part of the budget report which will be presented to the Board on 27th February and to Scottish Government thereafter.

Directors of Service Delivery will develop, agree and communicate implementation plans for each service delivery area in partnership with local FBU officials.

Signed:



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